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PATENT  
33168-2130REMARKS

This proposed Rule 116 Amendment has been submitted at the suggestion of the Examiner pursuant to discussions earlier today in the hope that it will place the application in condition for immediate allowance.

As it was explained in the telephone conference, the invention lies in the counter-intuitive reduction of hydrogen peroxide concentration levels to very low levels so that the hydrogen peroxide is virtually certain to decompose into its harmless components shortly after it is packaged. This avoids having the hydrogen peroxide present in the sponge for a long time before the sponge is unpackaged for use. This is contrary to the teaching of the prior art in which higher concentrations of hydrogen peroxide are specified, apparently to insure that enough hydrogen peroxide is available to act as a bactericide at all times prior to the package being opened.

The inventor has recognized that this can result in excessively high metallic ion content in the sponge.

Accordingly, the claims now have been amended to recite a hydrogen peroxide concentration of "substantially" below 1%, down to a minimum of about 0.05%.

The claims also contrast from the principal prior art reference in that the container specified as a plastic bag which

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is typically used for packaging new, unused sponge brushes as opposed to used sponge brushes being dealt with in the principal prior art reference.

Certain of the claims have been cancelled by this Amendment so that the total remaining claims are six in number, thus simplifying the claim structure.

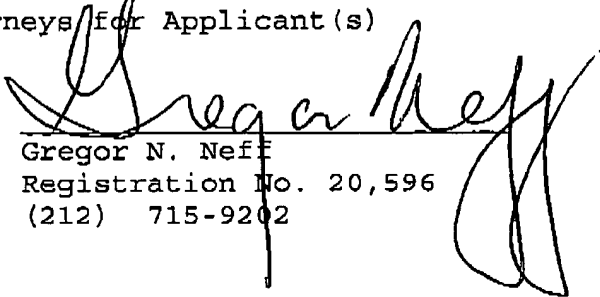
It is respectfully requested that the application be allowed and passed to issue.

If this Amendment is not deemed to place the application in condition for immediate allowance, please enter the Amendment in order to place the claims in better condition for appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

KRAMER LEVIN, NAFTALIS & FRANKEL LLP  
Attorneys for Applicant(s)

By:

  
Gregor N. Neff  
Registration No. 20,596  
(212) 715-9202